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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABIDJAN 001250

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IV](#) [UN](#)

SUBJECT: OPPOSITION PARTIES UNHAPPY WITH UNSCR 1721; PM
FINALLY REACTS PUBLICLY TO GBAGBO'S EFFORTS TO UNDERCUT HIM

REF: A. ABIDJAN 1228

[1](#)B. ABIDJAN 1237

Classified By: DepPolEconChief EMassinga, Reasons 1.4 (b & d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. The Ivorian political class continues to react to UNSCR 1721 and the President's ongoing efforts to shape the political terrain to his liking. Both the Forces Nouvelles (NF) and major unarmed opposition parties expressed disappointment with 1721, specifically the decision to avoid explicitly subordinating the Ivorian constitution. However, they both indicated that they would accept the resolution and asked the international community to react to the President's apparent dismissal of 1721 elements he doesn't accept. Prime Minister Banny has asked the Embassy to issue a statement supportive of his position, and finally made a statement himself indicating that he will restart the identification process, disarm the militias, reintegrate the military and restore civil administration throughout the country. End Summary.

New Forces

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[1](#)2. (C) DCM and Econ Chief met with Forces Nouvelles Deputy Secretary General and Minister of Solidarity and War Victims

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Louis Andre Dacoury Tabley on November 6 in his Abidjan ministerial HQ. In an animated discussion, Dacoury expressed the NF's plain displeasure with the President's immediate efforts to define the adoption of UNSCR 1721 as a victory. Recounting the history of the conflict since 2002, Dacoury placed the blame for incessant blockages to the peace and reconciliation process in the camp of the President and his supporters. Dacoury then went on to discuss what the NF sees as the key to genuine progress, the resumption of the audiences foraines and identification process. Claiming that more than half of the citizenry lacks national identification cards (himself included), he claimed that Gbagbo's is the latest in a line of Ivorian governments that have manipulated the national identification question for electoral advantage. Dacoury argued that the identification program launched in the spring and summer should be renewed as it had been structured, saying it went hand-in-hand with the successful roll-out of the pre-regroupment process within the DDR framework. Dacoury rejected modifying the audiences foraines through the use of an expanded cadre of fixed judges, arguing that without the audiences foraines, many average citizens would not be registered because of the hardship involved in having to travel long distances.

[1](#)3. (C) Reacting to FPI talking points blaming the "rebellion" for failing to disarm as the central factor impeding the reunification of the country, Dacoury said the FPI was using the disarmament question to hide its unwillingness to allow a process leading to elections to go forward. In response to standard FPI assertions that conducting audiences foraines in NF-controlled territory

would subject them to unacceptable pressure from armed partisans, Dacoury said international forces and all the political parties would supervise the process. Responding to a question, Dacoury said military-to-military discussions are beside the point; "the central problem is not a military one, but a political one. The militaries finished their work in July, but it remains up to political leaders to implement plans already agreed to." The Minister did concede that not all NF troops have remained in pre-regroupment areas under the process begun earlier this year because of the condition of these sites. However, he added that the troops could easily reconvene at these sites once the DDR process resumes.

¶4. (C) Dacoury said the NF support expanded powers for the PM. Turning to the role of the international community, and particularly the United States, Dacoury asked that Gbagbo be censured for his outright refusal to cooperate with the international will, as expressed in UNSCR 1721. In response to a DCM observation that the international community cannot impose peace, Dacoury said "you are here. Do something. Require those who promise something to keep their word." Noting that the Constitution was approved by a minority, the Minister questioned the UNSC's (and U.S.'s) unwillingness to explicitly subordinate it to 1721.

RHDP

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¶5. (C) The Ambassador met with Rally of Houphouetists for Democracy and Peace (RHDP, a coalition of the major unarmed oppositions parties, the PDCI and the RDR) Chairman Alphonse Djedje Mady at PDCI HQ on November 7. In a well-choreographed meeting, the RHDP leadership was deployed in force, and a sizable press gaggle had been assembled to interview the Ambassador and Mady after the meeting, likely in response to the large press attention to the Ambassador's meeting with President Gbagbo a day earlier (reftel B), in

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which the pro-government press had slanted the Ambassador's words to indicate U.S. support for the President.

¶6. (C) In a frank ninety-minute meeting, Mady expressed deep reservations about President Gbagbo's real willingness to allow the peace and electoral processes to move forward towards elections in October 2007. After the nearly obligatory review of the history of the crisis since 2002, Mady began the meeting in earnest by presenting deep dissatisfaction with the outcome of UNSCR 1721, and asked how the U.S. could have supported it. Focusing on the question of the interaction of the constitution and 1721, Mady said that since the entire Marcoussis-inspired peace process is outside the limits of the Ivorian constitution, excessive fidelity to it by the international community does not serve the Ivorian people or advance the peace process. Using carefully prepared points, Mady said neither Gbagbo's extended mandate, the mixed cabinet nor the powers given to the PM to issue decrees were to be found in the Constitution, but all these elements are enshrined in 1721. Going further and referring directly to Gbagbo's aggressive public efforts to undercut the PM and define 1721 as it suits him, Mady asked how the international community and the United States specifically could accept the President's open "rejection" of the UNSC's stated will.

¶7. (C) The Ambassador responded with two points. The first was that 1721 was the result of a compromise, and that its treatment of the constitutional question was as far as UNSC was willing to go and that the resolution and constitution are not contradictory. Second, that the U.S. treats the question of whether the United Nations can abridge national sovereignty and a national constitution carefully, and that creating such a precedent could not be undertaken lightly. The Ambassador emphasized that the U.S. position on 1721 "was not a vote for Gbagbo or the FPI or anyone else, it was a vote for the principle."

¶8. (C) Mady virtually ignored the Ambassador's first point and focused his attentions exclusively on whether the international will and the right to protect populations supersedes sovereignty. Pointing to the Iraq situation, he noted that the Saddam Hussein regime had a constitution, but the U.S. led efforts to topple his unjust government. Mady said his party couldn't understand why the U.S. would side with Russia and China in the Security Council's deliberations, countries, he said, which have questionable democratic credentials. Mady said that the "FPI has infiltrated all facets of the government and security forces," and that as long as Gbagbo is the "prime mover" he will act to block progress. Referring obliquely to the recent events in Yopougon in which local residents forcibly ejected pro-government militiamen (septel), Mady said "our people are ready to go to the streets to support Banny."

Prime Minister Banny
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¶9. (C) The Prime Minister's Political Advisor Yaya Dembele met with the Econ Chief on November 6th, and confided that the Prime Minister's team was divided as to how to respond to the President's post 1721 political offensive. Dembele asked directly if the U.S. Embassy would issue a public statement in support of the Prime Minister should the latter issue a decree that would be contradicted by either the President or senior leaders of the armed forces. (Note: the Ambassador plans to meet with the PM to discuss this and other matters. Results will be reported in septel). In the afternoon of November 8, the Prime Minister delivered a long-expected public speech, saying he would relaunch the identification and DDR processes and proceed with the integration of the military, dismantling of militias, and reestablishment of state authority throughout the national territory. He provided few details, and the speech was delivered abruptly at 1336 GMT, an hour after his camp had announced it would be postponed until the evening. Consequently, much of Abidjan was unsure if the PM had actually spoken for much of the afternoon of the 8th.

¶10. (C) Comment: Although the opposition is unhappy with UNSCR 1721's lack of precision on the question of its interaction with the Ivorian constitution, it is important to recognize that they accept it. We anticipate they, as well as the Prime Minister, will continue to look to the international community to compel Gbagbo's compliance with its provisions. End Comment
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